

# FAMILY RESOURCE

## C O N N E C T I O N

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*Moving anytime can bring about thoughts of dread. When children are involved it can be even more overwhelming. In this article learn helpful tips to ease the transition of moving before, during, and after the move. Learn to recognize the signals indicating a child is having difficulty with a move. Gather tips on how to make your move an adventure for your whole family.*



### **Moving? Make the Move an Adventure for the Whole Family**

With all the flurry of preparing for a move, our children's feelings can sometimes get lost in the shuffle. There are ways to help ease the transition of moving for the whole family. Moving can turn into a fun experience by fostering communication and by creating excitement about the adventure that lies ahead.

#### **Before and During the Move**

Children typically follow the example of their parents when adjusting to a move, so a positive attitude on your part can go a long way. Describe the move as a new adventure and treat it as such. Remember, much of a child's tensions with a move involves fear of the unknown, so your communication about what is going on can do a lot to ease anxiety.

- **Take the children along on house-hunting trips**, or at least bring back pictures of houses you looked at. This can build excitement about the prospect of a house, and it involves them in the process, instead of keeping it a mystery.
- **Talk about the move with your family on a regular basis.** Let the children communicate their feelings, questions, and concerns without interruption, then address them. Tell them what is going on and make decisions as a family.
- **Give yourself plenty of time to prepare for the move.** Create a calendar of moving preparations and significant dates. Post it in the kitchen where the children can check off each milestone as it happens.
- **Help your children feel involved with the moving preparations** by giving them their own tasks, such as boxing up their toys, sorting through their clothes, and labeling boxes with their new address.
- **Make a point to visit your children's friends to say good-bye.** Consider having a going-away party where your children can exchange addresses and phone numbers. Make a scrapbook of their favorite people and places in the neighborhood they will be leaving.

#### **After the Move**

Realize that there is a grieving period for children; it may last for weeks or even months. Generally, the younger the child, the easier the move. Older children and teenagers are extremely attached to their friends, school activities, and jobs. Younger children may miss their old room, a favorite teacher, or frequented park. Infants and toddlers can simply be confused by their new surroundings.

*(continued)*

#### **Mission**

*To open "New Horizons" of self-esteem and potential for the little people entrusted to our care, their families, and our employees by providing and continuously improving the best child development on the planet!*



- **Explore your new neighborhood and/or city together.** Take family outings to discover the parks, restaurants, schools, and other areas your children will be spending time. Make a map with all your children's favorite spots marked on it.
- **Encourage communication with old friends** by writing letters, sending e-mail messages, or making phone calls. This is healthy and eases the pain of transition.
- **Quickly enroll the children in sports and activities** that are similar to those they were involved with in their old neighborhood or city.

### Signals that Your Child is Having Difficulty with a Move

Some children will deal with a move better than others--some will talk about it, some will withdraw. Watch for the following signs that indicate your child may be having a particularly difficult time with a move, then consult a physician or mental health professional.

- Not asking questions about the move and avoiding the topic
- Sleep problems, including nightmares
- Excessive crying or frustration
- Outbursts of anger
- Reluctance to leave the house or be away from parents
- Reluctance to make new friends in the new neighborhood or school

Resources: *Helping Children Cope with Moving* (Gladden, 1992) and *Moving with Children* (Gylantic, 1993), both by Dr. Tom Olkowski, Ph. D.



### *What Shall We Give the Children?*

What shall we give the children?  
The holidays are almost here.  
Toys and games and playthings,  
As we do every year?

Yes, for the magic of toyland  
Is part of the holiday lore  
To gladden the heart of childhood.  
But I shall give something more.

I shall give more patience.  
A more sympathetic ear.  
A little more time for laughter,  
Or to tenderly dry a tear.

I shall take time to teach them  
The joy of doing some task.  
I'll try to find time to answer  
More of the questions they ask.

Time to read books together  
And take long walks in the sun.  
Time for a bedtime story  
After the day is done.

I shall give these gifts to my children,  
Weaving a closer tie,  
Knitting our lives together  
With gifts that money can't buy.

-author unknown

### *Important Information About Giving Nonprescription Medicine to Your Children*

1. Never guess on the amount of medicine given. Children are not just small adults. Half an adult dose may be more than your child needs—or not enough to help.
2. Always check for the proper dose. Read the label every time.
3. Know the abbreviations for tablespoon (Tbsp) and teaspoon (Tsp). Do not confuse them.
4. Avoid making conversions. If the label says two teaspoons and you are using a dosing cup with ounces only, get another measuring device.
5. Never play doctor. Twice the dose is not appropriate just because your child seems twice as sick as last time.
6. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before giving two medicines at the same time.
7. Always follow the age-limit recommendations. If the label says do not give to children under two, do not do it. Call your doctor.
8. Always use the child-resistant cap and re-lock the cap after each use.
9. Heed the "keep out of reach" warning. We have come a long way since cod liver oil and nose holding to get the medicine down. Today's medicines are often flavored—all the more reason to store all drugs out of reach.
10. As with any medicine, always check the package and the medicine itself for signs of tampering. Do not use any medicine from a package that shows cuts, tears, slices, or other imperfections. If you notice anything suspicious, tell the pharmacist or store manager.
11. Always check the expiration date. Do not use any expired medication.

Resource: U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Nonprescription Drug Manufacturers Association, *Child Health Alert*, November 2001.

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